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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CHINA AND TIBET, IRAQ

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies continued to focus their April 23 news coverage on the recent announcement of the new Cabinet appointments; on a group of Chinese real estate tycoons' visit to Taiwan; and on president-elect Ma Ying-jeou's platform to levy an energy tax in the future. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" criticizing Beijing for manipulating nationalistic sentiments among the Chinese people and taking advantage of anti-foreign protests to intimidate foreign businesses. A column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times," on the other hand, commented on the war in Iraq and said it is the watershed that marks the decline of the U.S. "empire." End summary.

12. China and Tibet

"Beijing's Manipulation of Nationalism Will Cause Heavy Losses for China's Economy"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] editorialized (4/23):

"... What is really absurd is the fact that the boycott against the [Olympic] torch relay around the world was triggered by China's crackdown on Tibet. It is thus China's fault, and the Chinese people should feel ashamed of the brutality of the Beijing regime. But in order to shift domestic resentment in China, Beijing unexpectedly manipulated nationalistic sentiment in an attempt to take advantage of its people's anti-foreign protests to intimidate other countries and foreign businesses. ...

"China declared to the public its 'peaceful rise' and that it 'will not seek hegemony,' and the international community all welcomed such a move, believing that it conducive to world peace and stability. But it appears that China only used some good words to create a good image for itself, while in reality it still sticks to its way of doing things, lords it over others, and remains domineering, tyrannical and obsessed with [takig] the road of totalitarianism and hegemony. China must accept the laws and values of the civilized world and should no longer manipulate populism just to counter the international community. Otherwise, it will only find that the road it is taking getting narrower and consequently ending up at a dead end."

13. Iraq

"The War in Iraq Is the Watershed That Marks Decline of the U.S. Empire"

Columnist Lin Po-wen commented in his column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (4/23):

"... In September 2005, [then-]U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick publicly demanded that China work to become a 'responsible

stakeholder' on the international stage. But in reality, during the Cold War and post-Cold War periods, the United States has constantly played the role of an irresponsible stakeholder, particularly when it comes to the Middle East issue. The Middle East issue [used to] refer to the Palestinian problem, and now added to it is the issue of Iraq. The United States should be held largely responsible for the failure to resolve the Palestinian problem. As for Iraq, what the United States has been doing is digging its own grave, and its originator, [President George W.] Bush, will step down January 20, 2009, while the new president will have to take over the mess. Regardless of whether or not the United States withdraws its soldiers [from Iraq], the war in Iraq has severely damaged the United States' strength, just as the Boer War did to the British Empire. Perhaps it will still be a long time before [we] move from the decline of the United States to the rise of the century of Asia, but we can at least see the light of the day in the distance now."

YOUNG